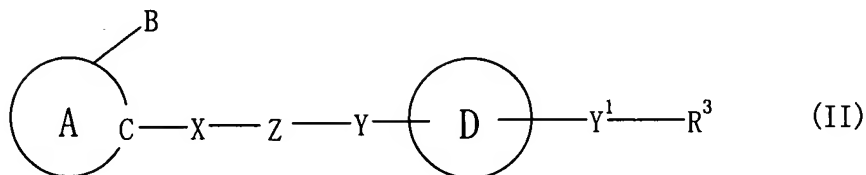


## Amendments to the Claims

1-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) A compound represented by the formula



wherein

ring A is a 5-membered aromatic heterocycle containing 2 or more nitrogen atoms, which may further have substituent(s);

B is an optionally substituted hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group;

X is a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group;

Z is -O-, -S-, -NR<sup>2</sup>-, -CONR<sup>2</sup>- or -NR<sup>2</sup>CO- (R<sup>2</sup> is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group);

Y and Y<sup>1</sup> are the same or different and each is a bond or a divalent acyclic hydrocarbon group; and

D is a ring optionally further having substituent(s);

R<sup>3</sup> is an optionally substituted acyl group or an optionally substituted heterocyclic group, provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is imidazole, then Z should not be -O-,

~~and~~ provided that when the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is pyrazole, X is methylene, Z is -S- and Y is a bond, then the ring represented by D should not be oxadiazole, and provided that

5-(difluoromethyl)-3-{4-[3-(1-ethyl-1H-pyrazol-3-yl)propoxy]-3,5-dimethylphenyl}-1,2,4-oxadiazole, and N-[3-(5-{4-amino-2-[(3,4,5-trimethoxyphenyl)amino]-1,3-thiazol-5-yl}-1,2,4-oxadiazol-3-yl)-4-methylphenyl]-2-(1-methyl-1H-imidazol-4-yl)acetamide are excluded,

or a salt thereof.

**10. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, wherein the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is a pyrazole, oxadiazole, thiadiazole, triazole or tetrazole ring.

**11. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, wherein the optionally substituted acyl group represented by  $R^3$  is a group of the formula:  $-SO_2R^4$ ,  $-SOR^4$  or  $-PO_3R^4R^5$  wherein  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  are the same or different and each is a hydrogen atom, a hydrocarbon group or a heterocyclic group, and  $R^4$  and  $R^5$  may form a heterocycle together with the adjacent oxo-substituted phosphorus atom and two oxygen atoms.

**12. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, wherein the 5-membered aromatic heterocycle represented by ring A is a pyrazole ring.

**13. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, wherein B is an optionally substituted aromatic hydrocarbon group or an optionally substituted aromatic heterocyclic group.

**14. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, wherein X is a divalent  $C_{1-8}$  aliphatic hydrocarbon group.

**15. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, wherein Z is  $-CONR^2-$  ( $R^2$  is a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group).

**16. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, wherein Y is a bond or a  $C_{1-4}$  alkylene.

**17. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, wherein  $Y^1$  is a bond or a  $C_{1-4}$  alkylene.

**18. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, wherein the ring represented by D is a  $C_{6-14}$  aromatic hydrocarbon ring.

**19. (Original)** The compound of claim 9, which is diethyl [4-((2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]prop-2-enoyl}amino)benzyl]phosphonate; (2E)-N-{4-[(2,4-dioxo-1,3-thiazolidin-5-yl)methyl]phenyl}-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]acrylamide; (2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-[4-(1H-imidazol-1-ylmethyl)phenyl]acrylamide; (2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-[4-(1H-pyrazol-1-ylmethyl)phenyl]acrylamide; diethyl [4-((2E)-3-[1-methyl-5-(2-thienyl)-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]prop-2-enoyl}amino)benzyl]phosphonate; (2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-{4-[(3-methyl-2,4-dioxo-1,3-thiazolidin-5-yl)methyl]phenyl}acrylamide; (2E)-N-[4-(1H-benzimidazol-1-ylmethyl)phenyl]-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]acrylamide; (2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-{4-[(methylsulfonyl)methyl]phenyl}acrylamide; (2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-{4-[hydroxy(2-pyridinyl)methyl]phenyl}acrylamide; (2E)-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]-N-[4-(4-morpholinylmethyl)phenyl]acrylamide; or (2E)-N-{4-[(ethylsulfonyl)methyl]phenyl}-3-[5-(4-fluorophenyl)-1-methyl-1H-pyrazol-4-yl]acrylamide.

**20. (Original)** A pharmaceutical agent comprising the compound of claim 9 or a prodrug thereof.

**21. (Previously presented)** A method for preventing or treating neuropathy in a mammal, which comprises administering the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

**22. (Previously presented)** A method for promoting production or secretion of a neurotrophic factor in a mammal, which comprises administering the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

**23. (Previously presented)** A method for ameliorating pain in a mammal, which comprises administering the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

**24. (Previously presented)** A method for protecting a nerve in a mammal, which comprises administering the compound of claim 9 to said mammal.

**25-30. (Cancelled)**